april 25

the

Commonweal

CHESTER BOWLES

AMERICAN AID TO ASIA

GUNNAR D. KUMLIEN

CRISIS AT NOMADELPHIA

JOHN W. SIMONS

SALVATION IN THE NOVELS

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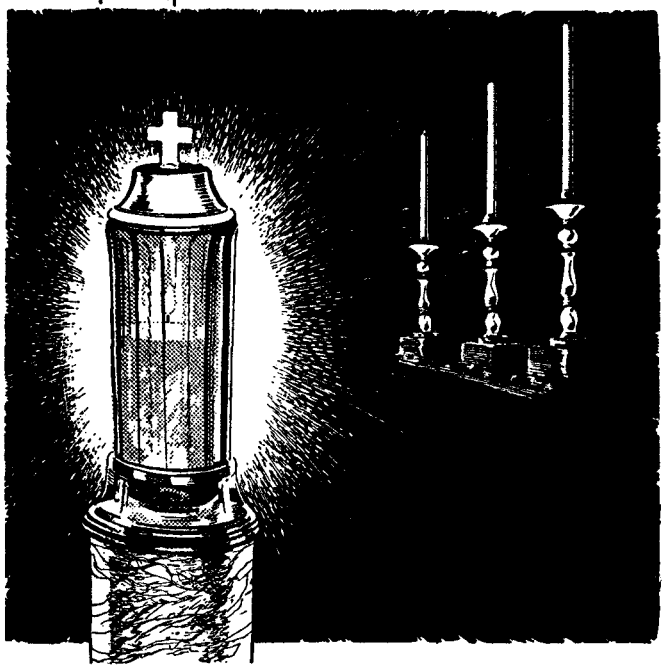

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THE Commonweal

week by week

"MY SON JOHN"

THE glorification of the mass-man and his stock-in-trade, the commonplace, has been so obvious on the American cultural scene for so long that we tend to take it for granted as one of the inevitable by-products of democracy. The typically American mass-man, as conceived in Hollywood's "nice" movies, is very often an amiable enough fellow, and his commonplace approach to the problems of existence frequently makes up in moral rectitude what it lacks in intellectual subtlety.

We may be convinced that certain problems confronting us will not admit a solution through the black-and-white attitudes toward them which the mass-man tends to substitute for complex analysis, but, then, we hope that in most matters of great import he will be led by more expert advice. It is only when there seems a danger that in a question vitally touching the common good his attitudes will prevail over truth itself that we must demand a revaluation of his role in our society. Such a danger is dramatically symbolized in a new Hollywood film, "My Son John."

"The characteristic of the hour," Ortega y Gasset wrote in his *Revolt of the Masses,* "is that the commonplace mind, knowing itself to be commonplace, has the assurance to proclaim the rights of the commonplace and to impose them wherever it will." This imposition on all levels of society he describes as "the vertical invasion of the barbarians." We do not recall a more striking single justification of Ortega's fears for the survival of civilization itself if this imposition goes unchallenged than the exhibition, accompanied by great fanfare, of "My Son John."

The problem it sets out to attack is the admittedly very real problem of Communist subversion in our society. The answer it proposes (indeed, holds up as the American ideal) is an attitude which approximates what has come to be known as "McCarthyism." It is a film which in a calmer time and a more stable cultural context could be ignored as a rather hysterically acted, shabbily thought-out approach to a problem of the greatest complexity. "My Son John" cannot be so ignored today because it sums up and universalizes an attitude which in some ways is as great a threat to our future as the evil it attempts to combat.

The attitude it represents is a self-conscious anti-intellectualism, a glorification of the easy slogan as the solution to all our problems; the threat it offers is to truth itself because truth knows nothing of slogans.

The fact that some film critics have condemned "My Son John" should cause little concern to the makers of the movie or its enthusiastic admirers. Indeed, this must somehow confirm their darkest fears. It must have been expected, because film critics should be people who are paid to think, and the major implication of the film is that thinking is an extremely hazardous and suspect occupation. (Find a thinker, the film suggests, and you've probably found a "commie.")

THIS slogan approach to patriotism makes short work of "intellectuals" and "highbrows." They're the ones who have perverted our youth. "Good Americans," the film implies, are those who are "vigilant." They don't bother very much with tiresome things like distinctions and evidence. They join the American Legion and "smell out" Communists. If, for example, they find a man who has a key to the apartment of a girl accused of subversion, their remarkable olfactory sense makes them certain that they've found a traitor. No further proof is needed.

No doubts disturb their certitude. The result is a nightmare-world where fathers find their sons' disapproval of the American Legion almost sure evidence of Party membership, and where, as a result, mothers demand that their sons take loyalty oaths. It is a sickening spectacle.

A further disturbing feature of this film is the fact that its thesis has been carefully placed in an ostensibly Catholic context. The parish priest, played as a genial idiot, is one of the "good guys" in this burlesque battle between black and white. And the pious mother refuses to take tablets pre-

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scribed by her physician on the grounds that "on Mount Sinai God gave Moses all the Tablets we need."

This combination of a questionable kindness toward "Catholicism" coupled with the strongly anti-Communist thesis of the film has apparently bowled over some Catholic journalists, who have been unqualified in their praise of "My Son John."

All this leads us to wonder whether some of us are not so overcome by a sense of cultural inferiority that we welcome any sympathetic portrayal of Catholics on the screen, no matter how caricatured, as good for us and good for our faith. And we'd like to know whether our legitimate anti-Communism has led us into a very subtle form of pragmatism which prompts us to support any and all manifestations of anti-Communism, no matter how reckless they may be with the truth, as something to be desired. If so, we have indeed fallen into a trap. This is the end justifying the means with a vengeance.

The cultural phenomenon now forced to our attention by this film represents a double danger for us, as Catholics and as Americans. As Catholics we must love the truth and reverence the intellect. We must oppose any threat to these, no matter how nobly motivated. The imposition of the attitudes of the mass mind, the adoption of the slogans of the commonplace, these are things which we have a duty to fight, and we must be especially wary of being enlisted in any crusade, even an anti-Communist crusade, which adopts these as its weapons. This is the basic reason why Catholics, more than other Americans, must oppose "McCarthyism."

NEXT WEEK

COMPTON MACKENZIE writes of his reactions on nearing the age of seventy.

"The exceptional man can still ride to hounds at eighty, but I doubt if such a man has taxed his mind overmuch in the course of a physically active life; and when the feebleness of the body at last asserts itself, such a man will inevitably feel that life has lost its savor. But why a man with a rich intellectual and emotional life, and a well-stored memory, should feel old because he can no longer climb a mountain without puffing, or outplay Colonel Bogey on his local golf links, passes my comprehension."

As Americans we must do battle against a spirit which would save the nation from internal subversion by forcing on us a monolithic slogan patriotism. "My Son John" has at least performed one great service. It has shown us the extent of the danger.

GERMAN UNITY

TO the Russians, the sight of a rearmed Germany aligned with the West has always been like a nightmare, calling up their darkest, almost pathological, fears of capitalist encirclement. No matter how often we emphasize that our intentions are purely defensive, these Soviet fears are facts to be dealt with, however ungrounded they may be.

We always knew this, and as a result we rated our efforts to integrate the German armed forces into the NATO structure as a calculated risk. But what we did not realize was quite how far Russia was prepared to go in order to prevent German solidarity with Western Europe, nor what form such efforts would take.

From the look of things, Russia today is quite prepared to abandon the German Communists in Eastern Germany in order to gain other and larger goals. To win a Germany at least neutral if not Soviet-oriented, the Russians appear to be ready to allow nation-wide free elections which would spell certain defeat for the Soviet-backed Socialist Unity party. What the Russians are gambling on is that Adenauer's Christian Democrats would likewise have a very difficult time winning a national election at this time. And if Adenauer goes, German military participation in Western defense goes too, since his opponents are vigorously opposed to Germany's present Westward course.

The possibility of a reunited Germany contained in Russia's proposal will naturally have great appeal for the German voter in any future elections. In addition, the road to rearmament and solidarity with the West, as charted by Adenauer, is not an easy one, calling as it does for considerable national sacrifice. On the other hand, the role of the "neutral," now being dangled before German eyes by the Russians, is a deceptively tempting one.

All in all, Soviet diplomats have presented Western leaders with a very explosive German proposal, and dealing with this latest and potentially very dangerous situation will take our best energies. That we have to face such a major challenge during this pre-election period is particularly unfortunate, since it seems that bipartisanship and responsible debate are very largely doomed until the votes are counted next fall.

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PSYCHOANALYSIS CONDEMNED?

THE relationship between psychoanalysis and Catholicism continues to exercise a popular fascination. The latest expression of this was made to order in Rome, where on April 8th Monsignor Pericle Felici published an article on the subject in the Bulletin of the Catholic Clergy. According to newspaper reports on the article, Monsignor Pericle condemned the doctrines and techniques of psychoanalysis and warned Catholics who, realizing its errors, have recourse to the latter, that they almost certainly commit mortal sin.

Monsignor Pericle is described as alluding to the well known theorizing of Freud regarding the origin of religious sentiments in man, as well as giving an account (a strikingly naive account, if the despatches are to be relied on) of the clinical technique of psychoanalysis. Many American newspapers did not hesitate to draw the hasty conclusion, blazoned in headlines, "Holy See Bans Psychoanalysis."

The New York *Times* despatch quoted certain unnamed Vatican officials to the effect that Monsignor Pericle's position could not be regarded as the official stand of the Church. The Pope himself or the Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office, within whose province are all matters of faith and morals, would have to make such a pronouncement before it became binding. The works of Freud, it was further pointed out, have not been placed on the Index.

Such opinion as Monsignor Pericle is said to have expressed is not original. It echoes statements heard from time to time from unofficial Catholic spokesmen on both sides of the Atlantic. But by no means is it the universal, perhaps not even the predominant, opinion of informed Catholic spokesmen. Serious Catholic students of psychoanalysis usually strike a balance between outright condemnation and wholehearted acceptance of all that is to be found in Freud. We have not yet seen the full text of Monsignor Felici's article. It may strike a greater balance than the quoted excerpts indicate.

A few elementary distinctions seem to be in order. Freud, the founder of psychoanalysis, was at once a theorist and a practitioner who described his techniques in detail. Today there are many different schools of psychoanalysis. Whatever their individual merits, jointly their differences manifest the possibility of adopting the practice and of being selective and syncretic in regard to the Freudian framework. Today, more and more Catholic psychoanalysts have assiduously worked out their own synthesis of traditional Christian doctrine and psychoanalytic practice, and have succeeded in putting at the disposition of their clients the incontestable benefits of psychoanalytic therapy. It would be cruel indeed to disturb such relationships by implying, without the backing of the highest moral authority after it has scrutinized the procedure, that they involve the hazard of mortal sin.

Unfortunately, in certain places—and perhaps this is the case in circles known to Monsignor Felici—psychoanalysis first gains notice as a fad, cultivated by idle libertines who see in it a justification for their own primitive manner of existence. A better acquaintance with psychoanalytic practice later reveals it to be a method of reducing the irrational and instinctual components of human motivation—to which cause the Church too has long been dedicated.

It goes without saying that, despite the confusions in the American press, the Holy See does not speak definitively regarding a worldwide movement without investigating it thoroughly in all places where it has taken hold, nor does the Church, acting officially, choose as spokesman an ecclesiastic writing in a diocesan journal.

ANTI-INFLATION CONTROLS

FEW people would call the present anti-inflation program ideal. It is, in sad fact, a jerry-built affair, embodying as it does the various compromises and concessions that had to be made if there were to be any anti-inflationary program at all. But poor thing though it may be, it is all we have and it is better than nothing.

Unless Congress takes action, the present controls will expire in June. As things stand now, the entire anti-inflation program is in serious danger.

Most likely target for the attacks sure to come will be the Wage Stabilization Board. The heat engendered by the steel dispute is likely to help those who would like to see all controls scrapped. In the midst of the charges and counter-charges sure to mark the months ahead, there is danger that abolishment of the entire system of wage-price controls might seem like the easiest way out of an unpleasant situation.

But to follow the line of least resistance by dropping all controls at this point would be a serious mistake. We have not yet really felt the pinch of defense production. Billions have been appropriated, but many of the defense production lines which will ultimately devour critically short materials exist today only on paper.

Runaway inflation would cripple our civilian

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economy and deal a grave blow to our efforts to arm, and the most serious test of our determination to avoid it still lies ahead. Action on the stabilization program must be taken by the end of June. It should be in the direction of strengthening anti-inflation controls, not weakening or abolishing them.

TELEVISION FOR ALL

WITH the removal of its three-year ban against new television station construction, the Federal Communications Commission has made it possible for TV to penetrate to every section of the United States. Up to now, less than half the American people have had channels at their disposal; the phenomenon has been localized.

For the American home, nationwide television will present new problems. Once a man has taken the fatal step and figures out how to keep up with his payments, he is confronted with a number of decisions. For the adults in the household there is the matter of developing their powers of selection. For the children, who can be quieted by special programs at the tag end of the day, there is another sort of disciplinary problem. Making the best use of this new apparatus within the family circle supplies a certain challenge.

It is closely allied with the more public aspects of the medium: what can American citizens do as individuals, and in concert, to build up the quality of TV fare? The FCC has assigned channels in one-fifth of the communities that are eligible for facilities to non-commercial, educational interests.

Obviously the opportunities for more than light entertainment offered by TV are not confined to non-commercial programs. Here and there today major networks do produce debates, panel discussions, specially adapted plays, concerts and news programs that provide substantial rewards for the discerning viewer.

The fact that a program is presented with an educational label will not guarantee that it is worth doing. It can easily be a vehicle for erroneous, noxious or half-baked ideas. So that there are two big fields demanding consistent spade work if television in the United States is to attain anything like its potential stature.

The scale of the expansion envisaged by the FCC makes it still possible to get into TV on the ground floor. It is one of those big new industries on which we count periodically to offset the tendency of the American economy to go into declines. And its product will have a lot to do with the directions in which our way of life develops.

THE STEEL SEIZURE

THE controversy centering around the threatened strike in steel and the resultant government seizure of the mills is likely to continue for many weeks. Indeed, the constitutional aspects of Mr. Truman's decision to seize the plants will be of historical importance long after the details of the steel dispute have faded into obscurity.

To examine in a brief space the complicated course of events that led up to the President's drastic decision is well nigh impossible. And for the non-economist to penetrate the labyrinth of figures involved in such issues as the relationship between prices and wages, profits before and after taxes and the like is very difficult. In this case, as in so many, the man in the street apparently has to pick the expert whose ideological and emotional outlook most closely approximates his own, then stick with that authority through thick and thin.

We can sympathize with President Truman's reluctance to invoke the Taft-Hartley injunction provisions, entirely aside from the political implications of such action. As the President pointed out, the union had already voluntarily postponed the strike for more than ninety days. To thank the steelworkers with an injunction would hardly have been just. And we wish the managers of steel had shown as much willingness to bargain realistically before the talks broke down as they have shown since the government seized the mills.

On the general question of the seizure of the steel plants, however, we are not in agreement with the President's action. Government action may in the end have been necessary, but we think a better way could have been devised. However general and accurate may be the conviction that Harry Truman has no desire to become a dictator, his methods in this case seem to have been much too arbitrary. Nor was the curse taken off Mr. Truman's action by his *ex post facto* appeal to Congress.

The unions should not forget that railroad workers find their present position under government operation of the lines not exactly to their liking. The power used in this instance to seize the steel plants, if not subject to some checks or judicial review, could spell the end of essential guarantees against arbitrary action without due process of law. The same methods now used for the benefit of unions could on another occasion be turned against them with telling effect. If government operation of the steel plants was necessary to prevent their closing, Mr. Truman should have asked Congress for enabling legislation rather than calling on vague and unspecified powers to do it on his own.

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American Aid to Asia

THE BATTLE FOR THE ORIENT IS NOT BASICALLY A STRUGGLE BETWEEN ARMIES BUT BETWEEN IDEAS

CHESTER BOWLES

THERE is no longer any serious question that America must give help to non-Communist Asia, if the rest of that great continent is to be built into a confident, secure bastion of democracy. It is only too clear that unless we act now, and act with wisdom and understanding, Asia may in a few years time be lost to the free world as China has already been lost.

The question is not *whether* America must help Asia but *how*. The sincerity of America's belief in our own democratic principles will be put to one of its greatest tests, I believe, in the way we answer this question.

The struggle between Communist and non-Communist forces in Asia today is not basically a struggle of arms. It is a battle for man's mind and loyalties. Although we must at all times be prepared to stop aggression, a stable, secure, democratic Asia will not be won by armed might or even industrial power alone. It can be won only by giving the people of Asia—all its half starved, impoverished, disease-stricken millions —not only a better and more meaningful life, but a renewed faith in themselves and in their own culture, and above all a chance to participate themselves in this building of a new future through their own democratic governments.

Has America the vision to help Asia on these terms? I believe we have—if we will reassert one of our own great democratic principles, namely, that the most fundamental long range strength of any democracy lies primarily not in armaments or even in twentieth century mass production machinery, but in the convictions of the people themselves. It is equally certain that unless we do make this affirmation, and see our aid to Asia in these terms, democracy in Asia will fail and Communist domination will be assured. The people of Asia have too long been ignored as human beings with human wants, to be approached or won on any other basis.

Specifically, what should America do? Let us take the urgent case of India, which is not only much the largest but also the most critical and pivotal non-Communist nation in all Asia.

India today has a vigorous democratic government. In its four short years of independence it has summoned up remarkable energy, skill and imagination to tackle the overwhelming problems left from centuries of colonial oppression. The most crucial of those problems are to bring food, health and hope to its three hundred and fifty million people.

The job is a staggering one. Ninety per cent of these three hundred and fifty million people live in small rural villages, wholly dependent on the land for their food and well-being. Yet their soil is depleted from years of misuse and lack of fertilizer; their agricultural methods are antiquated; their farm implements primitive and ineffective. The life-giving monsoon rains in India are uncertain; irrigation is inadequate.

As a result the villagers live a life of poverty almost unbelievable to an American who has not seen it with his own eyes. Most of the villagers have never had a chance to learn to read or write. Nearly all must go from birth to death without seeing a doctor; five out of every ten children die, largely from preventable diseases, before reaching their twelfth year.

Yet in every sense the basic democratic strength of India lies in the villages. In the intelligence, resourcefulness and self-respect of each village farmer lies the hope of solution to India's greatest problem—the production of enough food. In the health of every village family lies the hope of stronger citizens to till the fields and carry on the work of the nation. In the literacy and education of the villagers lies the hope not only of individual advancement but of political understanding in the fight against the forces of Communism.

The task of strengthening Indian democracy then is securing the participation of the villagers themselves in their own advancement.

It is for this job that India needs American help, for India has neither the capital, the equipment, or sufficient technical skills, or the present food productive capacity to do the job alone.

OBVIOUSLY, the United States cannot come up with any ready-made answers and impose them upon the Indian village people. Nor can we assume

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that by importing some of our ultra-modern features—sleek modern hospitals, fluorescent-lighted schools, one hundred-horse-power tractors and combines—Indian village life will be transformed into a model of American democracy.

This high-powered mechanized approach has already been tried, with spectacular lack of success, in some village areas elsewhere in the world, and today these areas are among the greatest strongholds of Communism. The same methods would meet with even greater failure in India, whose culture and character are so completely different from the West's.

Intelligent aid to Asia will require a deeper concept and the broadest understanding. It will require that we have the patience and willingness to let the Indian people themselves, using our tools and equipment and acting under our inspiration and technical guidance, work out their own advancement in ways particularly adapted to their culture.

On January 4th, the United States and the Government of India signed an agreement for just this kind of assistance. Under this agreement fifty communities of three hundred villages each will soon be established in a village-to-village rural development program of a kind never before tried in Asia or anywhere else. With the advice of American farm specialists and technicians, with DDT, tube wells, better seeds and fertilizers, and a few simple farm tools from American plants and factories, with American vaccines and know-how, but with the entire program directed and managed by Indians, fifteen thousand villages and some ten million Indian people will soon have their first honest chance to participate in a great movement to solve their own problems and work out their own advancement.

Experience in a pilot development project in Etawah, one hundred and eighty miles south of Delhi, has already shown that spectacular gains in food production alone can result from such a community program. Yields of potato and wheat have been increased as much as four hundred per cent while the over-all average increase in food production is forty-six per cent in the space of three years. There have been equally remarkable gains in village health, literacy and home improvement, and above all in the hopeful spirit of the people.

PRESIDENT TRUMAN has now asked Congress for an extension of this rural development program for India, plus assistance to the Indian government's efforts to complete their great irrigation program within the next few years. The cost of such a program for this great democratic nation of three hundred and sixty million people would be two hundred and fifty million dollars a year over a period of four years (including additional commodity grants of wheat and cotton)—about the same as we put into Marshall Plan aid to tiny Greece, a nation of only eight million people, when that country needed restoration and strength against Communist aggression, following the war. . .

If that aid is granted on a four-year basis, as I fervently hope it will be, India can set up not fifty community projects but six hundred. It can reach not fifteen thousand villages but one hundred and eighty thousand, with one hundred and twenty million people, more than one-third of all rural India. It can speed up the construction of one hundred and fifty-two major irrigation projects designed to irrigate sixteen million acres and increase India's food supply by sixteen per cent in the next four years. It can bring inspiration and new hope to the people of the entire nation, and indeed to all Asia.

In short, America has before it now the opportunity to assert its basic faith in democracy, to prove its faith that a free people, if they have an honest chance for advancement, and an honest chance to participate in that advancement, are the best assurance of democracy. And by proving this in India we will help to demonstrate for all Asians and indeed for all people everywhere the robust vitality of democratic techniques.

I believe America will meet this test. The American people, as they look deep into their own faith in democracy, are going to see that the strength of democracy rests ultimately in the hearts, minds and dignity of the people themselves. For if the people do not have that strength and conviction, no amount of guns, no military alliance, no records in steel production, can save democracy in America, in Asia or indeed anywhere in the world.

IT is only through an intelligent and generous sharing of forces between the strong and the weak that it will be possible to effect such a universal pacification as not to leave behind centers of conflagration and infection from which new disasters may come.

There are evident signs which go to show that, in the ferment of all the prejudices and feelings of hate, those inevitable but lamentable offspring of the war psychosis, there is still aflame in peoples the consciousness of their mutual dependence for good or evil, nay, that this consciousness is more alive and active.

Is it not true that profound thinkers see ever more clearly in the renunciation of egoism and national isolation, the way to general salvation, ready as they are to demand of their peoples a heavy participation in the sacrifices necessary for social well-being in other peoples?

—Pope Pius XII, Christmas Broadcast, 1942

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The Spotlight On "Pacific Affairs"

AT this writing the Institute of Pacific Relations is being investigated by Senator McCarran's Internal Security subcommittee. The charges against the IPR amount, in Senator McCarran's words, to an accusation that the IPR "was taken over by communist design and made a vehicle for attempted control and conditioning of American thinking, and American policy with regard to the Far East. It was also used for espionage purposes to collect and channel information of interest or value to the Russian communists."

The seven members of the subcommittee which is investigating these serious charges were ranked low by a bipartisan group of political scientists who recently rated all members of the Senate on the basis of attitude toward foreign and domestic problems, intellectual ability, and integrity. McCarran ranked eighty-seventh, O'Conor forty-seventh, Ferguson forty-ninth, Willis Smith sixty-fifth, Watkins eighty-first, Eastland eighty-second, and Jenner ninety-fourth.

The low caliber of the subcommittee has been reflected in its procedure. It has consistently shown every courtesy to anti-IPR witnesses, but it has just as consistently harassed pro-IPR witnesses with slanted and prolonged questioning, and has denied their lawyers the right to cross-examine witnesses hostile to their clients. The contrast with the procedure adopted at the MacArthur hearings last spring could not be more striking.

I think it is a mistake, however, to paint investigations such as this as "witch hunts" which threaten to destroy our civil liberties. Senators who indulge in such antics can still be beaten at the polls. Untruths, no matter by whom uttered, can still be exposed in the press. The answer to hysteria is not more hysteria but an effort to create a more mature public opinion which will demand that Congressional immunity not be used as a cloak for slander, and that our elected representatives spend less time hunting headlines and more time passing bills.

A factor in the hearings, but one very difficult to assess, is the role of the so-called China Lobby, which might be described as a variegated group of individuals highly sympathetic to Nationalist China and outspokenly critical of recent American policies toward China. Whatever the motives of these individuals may be, their views are based on a greatly exaggerated estimate of the importance of American, and even Soviet, policy in determining the pattern of recent events in the Far East. They ask why we did not save Chiang from the Communists; it would be more pertinent to inquire why we could not save him from himself. The propaganda of the China Lobby flatters our self-esteem and plays on our fears of Russia, but it does a serious disservice to truth and does not tell us how we can prevent a repetition in Indian and Southeast Asia of what happened in China.

The connection of the China Lobby with the IPR hearings is obscure, but some of its members are known to be friends of Louis Budenz, the chief anti-IPR witness, and at least one member of the Lobby has been a frequent spectator at the hearings. Beyond that, it can only be said that the Lobby undoubtedly approves of the way in which the investigation has been conducted (see Freda Utley's article, "The Strange Case of the I.P.R.," in the *American Legion Magazine,* March 1952).

AS for the IPR itself, I find it impossible to return a clear verdict. Whatever the deficiencies of the IPR, it is a unique organization, without which our knowledge of the Far East would be even less substantial than it actually is. On the other hand, many, but not all, of the books and articles published under its auspices reflect an arid leftist outlook and a tendency to present predetermined and highly debatable conclusions as though they were unchallengeable facts. For this the immaturity of American Far Eastern scholarship and of the generation of intellectuals who came of age during the era of Normalcy and the Depression, rather than any sinister design, is probably to blame in most cases.

The documentary evidence against the IPR, including the records seized in a New England barn, proves nothing more than the existence of this leftist attitude. Various witnesses, mainly ex-Communists, have gone further, however, and have identified various individuals affiliated with the IPR as members, at least at some time in the past, of the Communist Party.

Several of the accused, notably Frederick V. Field and Lawrence K. Rosinger, have refused to tell the subcommittee whether the charge is true, and under the circumstances silence amounts to an admission of guilt, as Owen Lattimore has agreed. Others, however, notably Lattimore himself, have denied the charge, and in their cases the evidence needs to be carefully weighed. It consists largely of alleged recollections of witnesses, often based on hearsay, and in no case on documentary evidence such as Whittaker Chambers produced against Alger Hiss. Such evidence must be carefully checked against known facts whenever possible, as it unfortunately rarely is. Joseph Alsop has

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rendered a great service by showing, in the April, 1952, issue of the *Atlantic,* that Louis Budenz either erred or lied in saying that John Carter Vincent and Owen Lattimore guided Henry Wallace along the Communist line during Wallace's visit to China in 1944.

BEYOND all that, there remains the charge of espionage. Nearly two years ago Senator McCarthy accused Lattimore of being not only the "chief architect" of the American Far Eastern policy but also the "top Russian espionage agent" in the United States. This last charge has not yet been established. Freda Utley generally supports McCarthy's accusations against Lattimore in her book *The China Story,* but she does not even mention the charge of espionage, let alone try to prove it.

Mr. Lattimore is an outstanding example of the arid leftism to which I have referred. It is true that as editor of *Pacific Affairs* he sometimes printed anti-Communist articles, but in such cases he often appended his own rebuttals. In the September, 1938, issue he defended the Soviet Purge Trials as a triumph for democracy, and he indicated to the Tydings Committee in 1950 that he still subscribed to this fantastic view. This despite the fact that even Molotov himself admitted in 1939 that many deplorable excesses had been committed during the purges. On the other hand, the main motivation of Lattimore's writings on China, Russia, and the border regions between them, it seems to me, is not pro-Communism as such but rather an admiration for power and efficiency, for might even against right, that is by no means uncommon among intellectuals. He has tended to prefer the interests of powerful Russia, where he has not lived, to those of chaotic China, where he has.

As for the influence of the IPR on American Far Eastern policy, there is room for disagreement. While the IPR has undoubtedly been one factor in the formulation of that policy, it has been only one among many. Reports from diplomatic personnel in the field, the wishes of various mission boards and exporting firms, Congressional pressures, domestic and foreign public opinion, the policies of foreign governments—all these, and not merely recommendations emanating from the IPR, have to be taken into account by those who lie on what one chief of the Far Eastern Division of the State Department described as his "bed of ten thousand nails."

There is plenty of room for doubt whether the IPR hearings, by investigating with objectionable methods charges which can probably never be fully proved or disproved, and by diverting public attention from a host of more pressing problems, are serving any purpose beyond the ends of partisan politics. Even if the charges against the IPR should prove to be true, the lengthy and expensive investigation would be justified only if our Far Eastern policy were still dominated by pro-Communist influences.

No one could reasonably call our present policy of fighting Communism in Korea, shipping arms to Formosa and Indochina, and restoring sovereignty to Japan pro-Communist. Regardless of Secretary Acheson's attitude before the beginning of the Korean war toward what was then the difficult problem of recognizing Red China, he has not "waited for the dust to settle" since June of 1950. It was he, above all other members of the Cabinet, who insisted that Communist aggression in Korea be firmly met.

So far, the only charge which has been proved against those members of the IPR who have denied Communist affiliations in testimony before the McCarran subcommittee is one of the same sort of deracinated leftism which has afflicted so many American intellectuals during the past generation. This outlook is not yet an offense under the laws of the United States, and I hope it may never become one. It is in our schools and churches, rather than in our Congressional committees or even our courts, that such attitudes must be combatted.

HAROLD C. HINTON.

FROM ITALY

The Crisis At Nomadelphia

WHAT has happened to Nomadelphia and its founder, the "mad priest" Don Zeno Saltini? Why has it been necessary for the Holy Office itself to intervene and dismiss Don Zeno? When the news broke these questions were asked by many friends of the bold experiment.

What has happened is, briefly, the following: On February 5th Don Zeno was called to the Papal Nuncio in Italy, Monsignor Francesco Borgongini Duca, who until recently had proved to be a great friend of Nomadelphia. Without a word the Nuncio handed Don Zeno a letter from the Holy Office which ordered him to withdraw from Nomadelphia and put himself at the disposal of his bishop or to choose any other diocese he preferred. Furthermore, assurance was given that the debts of Nomadelphia were going to be paid through a commission appointed by the Italian authorities and that Nomadelphia itself was going to be taken over by the Salesian Fathers. Without hesitation Don Zeno wrote that he obeyed.

When people learned what had happened through a

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letter written by Don Zeno to his "children," in which he described himself as "one of the most unhappy human beings in the world," the surprise all over Italy was enormous. The reaction in the press was almost universally favorable to Nomadelphia and nobody could at first understand the step taken by the Holy Office.

The eleven hundred and fifty inhabitants of the two Nomadelphias, the one near the town of Modena and the one near the town of Grosseto, declared when asked that they were ready to obey the Church in all moral and dogmatic questions. Finally Monsignor Borgongini Duca himself arrived at the Modena Nomadelphia with a Dominican representing the Holy Office and met the official leaders of Nomadelphia, who are now all laymen. Agreement was reached and a statement issued, declaring that Don Zeno continues to enjoy the ecclesiastical authorities' highest esteem, that the step taken had nothing to do with morals or doctrine but only with "administration." In other words Nomadelphia was approved and the ecclesiastical authorities had no objection to its future existence as long as Don Zeno was no longer associated with it.

The inhabitants of Nomadelphia, being laymen, declined to be directed by the Salesians, and only one Salesian Father was installed, with the function of a parish priest. Stress was put on Nomadelphia's lay character and, finally, a gift in kind from the Holy Father was handed over.

A couple of days later the police arrived at Nomadelphia, asking for a boy of nine who had been accepted seven years earlier by one of the mothers. The boy's real mother, who had never cared for him, wanted him back, because she thought Nomadelphia was going to have trouble. The order had to be carried out in spite of the boy's desperate resistance. At the railway station of Modena a most painful incident ensued; the boy rolled himself on the ground and howled with terror and grief.

THAT is briefly what has happened to Nomadelphia. So far it is impossible to foresee what the final outcome will be. At this point Don Zeno has obeyed and Nomadelphia has obeyed. No criticism has been made of them, not even for the debts, which, according to the letter from the Holy Office, are going to be paid by the Italian authorities, and were already being gradually reduced by a special commission which included some of the financially strongest names in Northern Italy.

In the meantime the inhabitants of Nomadelphia, who have shown a remarkable discipline, have taken grim and determined steps to survive. Many of their earlier friends do not intend to help them any more. (But the heiress to one of Italy's biggest industrial enterprises has given them everything she possesses.) Nomadelphia had always been most embarrassing to the Communists. Now the Communists are apparently less afraid than they were of these strange Christians who are in a position to call them reactionaries, and they have in recent weeks become openly critical of the experiment.

The council of married laymen and married or unmarried mothers, which is now directing Nomadelphia, is planning to reduce slightly the number of its inhabitants, concentrating on Nomadelphia II near Grosseto in Tuscany, and abandoning the former concentration camp near Modena. Many of its friends who have remained faithful and many new friends have promised to form a "parenthood" to Nomadelphia, which means that they promise to pay the one hundred and sixty dollars a year considered sufficient to maintain each child in addition to the seven children every unmarried mother or married mother with her husband is considered able to support.

IT is obvious that the Holy Office has not taken its step without reason. Nomadelphia, which was founded twenty years ago, has not changed since the day Cardinal Schuster preached to an enormous crowd in honor of its mothers, exclaiming: "This *is* the Gospel —all the rest is framework." But the general political situation in Italy and in the world has changed.

More than ever it is necessary to form a united front against Communism. The Christian Democratic Party in Italy has gradually eliminated its left wing, slowly transforming itself from a central into a more and more right-wing and stoutly conservative party. Luigi Gedda, considered one of its most energetic and authoritarian representatives, has been placed at the head of Catholic Action, as a complement to the tough Minister of the Interior Mario Scelba.

Today, there is not one less Communist or one less unemployed person than when the party came to power four years ago. On the contrary, unemployment is increasing, prices are soaring, and the party has to be prepared if it is going to be able to keep the majority after next year's elections. Everything has gone Right in a kind of crisis preparation for an all-out fight against Communism. Italians have taken sides, ready for the showdown.

Nomadelphia has remained somewhere in the middle, with its revolutionary love for the least of Christ's brethren and with its claim for social justice now, instead of mere talk and promises for the future. During the last elections Nomadelphia inhabitants abstained from voting because none of the political parties came near its ideals, not even the Christian Democratic Party. Don Zeno once told Minister of the Interior Mario Scelba, who is well known for his ruthlessness:

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"Call yourself a Minister, but don't call yourself a Christian." Nomadelphia has become an embarrassment not only to the Communists. To use Cardinal Schuster's own terms: the Gospel has come into conflict with the framework. . .

THE reaction of public opinion throughout the world has shown that this conflict has implications extending beyond the Catholics of Italy. The Nomadelphia crisis is by no means solved with the dismissal of Don Zeno. Since Nomadelphia is not a religious community but an association of Catholic laymen and laywomen declaring themselves willing to obey the leadership of the Church on matters of faith and morals, it is strangely invulnerable. If it succeeds in going on as it did, the dismissal of Don Zeno will not change anything essential and it will be ever so much more embarrassing, to both Communists and Christian Democrats.

Nomadelphia, then, has raised a problem for Catholics which is much more universal than an isolated incident. That the major Catholic parties saved Western Europe from Communism just after the war is agreed upon. That these parties are the only anti-Communist organizations on the international level in Europe is agreed upon too. But it is strongly felt that these parties are not enough. They have been powerless against the social causes which make most Communists what they are.

On one hand, the Communist leaders are trying to monopolize the historical social evolution going on all over Europe, in order to use it for their own ends. On the other, the conservative forces, who feel that their privileges are menaced, are trying to use the Church for their ends, or at least to hide behind the Church as if it were a bastion.

In the long run it is impossible to defend an anachronistic social order merely because it is established. The problem then is that sooner or later the national social evolution must liberate itself from the deadly Communist grip. As things are now, the Church often appears to the masses influenced by Communism as the defender of outdated social privileges; to the upper classes, the historical social evolution, which every nation has to undergo, appears only as Communist propaganda.

To many people Nomadelphia means, therefore, that the Church—the Gospel and the framework—is something infinitely greater than an anti-Communist party (even if it is considered a part of the framework) and that bold social evolution is something quite different from the caricature which Communism makes of it. That is why Nomadelphia's fight for survival stirs up an interest out of proportion to its material importance.

GUNNAR D. KUMLIEN.

THE STAGE

THE GRASS HARP

TRUMAN CAPOTE'S first play, adapted in part from his own novel, means to do well by the theatre. It is anything but literal in its workmanship, it explores the freedoms of the mediums, and it employs all kinds of devices—fantastic settings, spotlighted interludes, and an evocative musical score—to make sure that the evening will have color, mood, and style.

But there is something irresponsible, and even faintly condescending, in Mr. Capote's approach to the stage. It is a little bit as though the author had set out to bestow his own rich talents on a waiting, and relatively easy, form, and as though we were expected to be grateful for the smallest of small favors. There is no sense of discipline about "The Grass Harp," of respect for the difficulties of an exacting form. Capote has tossed off a number of random recollections and reflections, draped them loosely over a whimsical frame, and then hoped—it seems to me—that the fanciful manner would justify, or at least excuse, the undigested matter.

The play begins simply and intelligibly enough. Dolly Talbo lives with, and under the thumb of, her sister Verena. Her companions are a casual, straight-thinking colored maid and a somewhat moody adolescent boy she has reared. When Verena brings home a dubious dinner guest who conspires to cheat Dolly of a home-made remedy for dropsy, Dolly packs up and gets out.

She flies to an old tree-house in the woods, where, with the maid, the boy, and a philosophical ex-judge who drops by, she means to take up residence. The shift from the relatively realistic opening scene to the all-out fantasy of the forest hideout is acceptable enough. What is immediately troublesome is the announcement, in literary rather than dramatic terms, that this is a play about unconventional people, people who cannot be expected to behave as run-of-the-mill townsfolk, people who are determined to pursue their natural "differences" and who are now engaged in an experiment to find out just what those differences are. Though the motivation for flight has been both obvious and substantial, it is now dismissed altogether in favor of a thematic attitude which has not been prepared and which never is dramatized.

In the forest, Dolly falls in love with the judge, the boy spends a few hours with a girl he is mildly interested in. But during the night the conventional townspeople turn up—these are hastily dashed-off stencils—to attack the tree-dwellers and force them home. Once she is back in the Talbo parlor, Dolly

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realizes that this is where she belongs. The judge is summarily dismissed, Dolly and Verena throw their arms about one another, and the curtain falls. The catharsis which unites the two sisters is never shared by the audience nor is it, in terms of what has gone before, precisely clear. Dolly has presumably fled from a conventional—though actually rather melodramatic—life, discovered her unconventional self in unconventional circumstances, and then fulfilled this new unconventional self by accepting her original situation. I may not be doing justice to Mr. Capote's thought; but neither is he. No doubt something could be made of this little paradox, but the author has not found a way to fit his ironies together and too much of the evening is spent going in two different directions, exploring what seem to be merely contrary propositions. In addition, the boy's story is left suspended in mid-air, the maid used merely to interpolate wisecracks.

The performers have done their very best to make all of this idly charming, and the physical production is superb. Mildred Natwick makes Dolly a winning figure, so winning that you are emphatically disappointed by her final gesture. Russell Collins is gently reasonable as the luckless judge, Georgia Burke robustly funny as the servant. Cecil Beaton's décor is as handsome as anything we have had all season, and Virgil Thomson's incidental score especially pleasing. (*At the Martin Beck*)

WALTER KERR.

THE SCREEN

ANYTHING DOES

BASED on the delightful book of reminiscences by George and Helen Papashvily, "Anything Can Happen" traces the experiences of George, who comes to this country from Russian Georgia, gets a job in New York City, lives with a group of Georgians and other immigrants, wrestles with the English language (and masters it better than most of us), meets the attractive American Helen and realizes he's in love with her just when she returns to California. So George and his whole group of unpredictable Georgians trek across the country to the sunny west coast where George acquires an orange ranch, his first papers and a fiancée.

The way the story is done, in William Perlberg's fine production, will warm your heart. George Seaton has directed with a strong feeling for this country and an amazing understanding of immigrants' attitudes toward it. From the beginning you feel what George feels as his ship passes the Statue of Liberty and as he views bewildering New York for the first time. In this lead role, Jose Ferrer gives his best screen performance, making George intensely sincere, honest, lovable and wanting very much to be as good an American as anyone.

If ever a movie made you admire a man and through him the country of his choice, it is "Anything Can Happen." Scenes like the one in which he meets Helen (nicely played by Kim Hunter) are inspiring. As a stenographer in magistrate's court where George has to appear when he gets a ticket for picking flowers in Central Park, Helen is as impressed with George's plea of innocence as the judge who tells him, "You've been a breath of fresh air in court this morning."

Although Seaton has directed well, the total effect of "Anything Can Happen" is somewhat episodic (as was "I Remember Mama" and "Life with Father"), and at times it gets quite sentimental. The film is fortunate in having in the supporting cast such good actors as Eugenie Leontovich, Oscar Karlweis, Oscar Beregi and Makhail Rasumny.

DEDICATED as it is to children, and adults who have forgotten they were once children, "Tomorrow Is Too Late" serves a good purpose. Like so many Italian films it is very sincere, but, unfortunately, in its enthusiasm for its thesis that teen-age children (and sometimes younger ones) should be given sex education, its script stacks the cards too obviously and pushes the film in a melodramatic direction. The leading characters are played with great sensitivity by Pier Angeli (this was made before her American films) and by Gino Leurini.

Neither of these adolescents, who go to a secondary school, understands what is happening to them when they begin to fall in love. Fortunately for both of them, when they are at a summer camp with their school mates, a wise teacher (portrayed with feeling and warmth by Vittorio DeSica, who acts in this picture but did not direct it) takes the boy aside and instructs him in the facts of sex beyond what the boy has already guessed or learned in the street. This "man-to-man" talk is extremely well handled (in fact all of the film is done in good taste). The teacher makes clear that he favors individual talks on the subject according to a boy's needs and understanding; he fits sex into its place as part of life in general and uses the "Hail Mary" as a point of reference in discussing reverence and purity. No doubt it was to emphasize the wisdom of the school-teacher played by DeSica that Director Leonide Moguy (who also had a hand in the script) made so many of the film's other elders so mean or stupid.

Although "Tomorrow Is Too Late" is well-acted throughout, it could have been a much better film if

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the director hadn't reiterated his points at such length and hadn't made some of his episodes so contrived. But in spite of its flaws, this Italian movie (which has good English subtitles by Herman Weinberg) deserves to be seen. It will be of special interest to parents who have been timidly wondering when to approach the subject with their children, and no doubt even to parents who already believe that sexual education is only one element in a composite whole.

PERHAPS one of the things that "Never Take No for an Answer" is trying to say is that the reason its young hero is so smart and endearing is because he had no parents to clutter up his life and let him down when he needed them most. In any case, as played by Vittorio Manunta, Peppino is one of the most winning yougsters ever seen in a movie. During the war, this orphan was found in a barn in Assisi by a G.I. who cared for him for a while and even now continues to send him advice from America—as well as soap, toilet paper, chocolate and other presents. A priest (Denis O'Dea) from the Church of St. Francis keeps an eye on eight-year-old Peppino and teaches him his lessons; and Violetta, the boy's beloved donkey, helps Peppino earn money in the cartage business. When Violetta falls ill and the father superior refuses to let Peppino take the donkey to the crypt of St. Francis, the determined boy goes to the Vatican to tell his story to the Pope.

It is difficult to convey the charm of this English movie. It was handsomely filmed in Italy with an English, American and Italian cast. Its script, based on Paul Gallico's "Small Miracle," is sentimental, but the unusual plot is handled with reverence. The photography is stunning with beautiful shots of the church at Assisi (including the Giotto murals) and the art treasures of the Vatican.

FOR people who are enamored of TV but still like to leave their sets occasionally to see the same kind of fare in a theater, there is "Valley of the Eagles," a curious adventure melodrama guaranteed to keep them on the edge of their seats. This is an English film made in Sweden, Norway and Lapland. It starts out as a thriller very much like the science-fiction films that have been in vogue in this country. A Stockholm scientist, who has invented an elaborate machine that transforms sound into electricity, discovers one night that his wife, his assistant and vital parts of his invention are missing. The scientist and a police inspector (Jack Warner), realizing that the missing couple are up to no good, take off after them and the valuable gadgets. The trail leads to desolate northern wastes where the two men join a party of Lapps and their herd of reindeer.

From then on, "Valley of the Eagles," which has so far been a talky and routine chase drama, becomes a really exciting outdoor affair complete with shots of reindeer stampeding over a precipice and savage wolves attacking our stalwart heroes who are still pursuing their quarry.

Director Terence Young, who also wrote the script which is jammed with hokum, wasn't adverse to using faked scenes occasionally. But the picture's high point is on the up-and-up and provides something new in nature thrills. Your admiration will depend on how raw you like your nature-in-the-raw.

IF you prefer your nature films uncluttered with traces of man in the visuals, hunt up the latest short in Walt Disney's True Life Adventure series. "The Olympic Elk" may not be as startling as previous items like "Beaver Valley" and "Nature's Half Acre," but it has some beautiful shots of the Olympic Mountain Range in the northwest corner of the United States, and the effective photography of the flora and fauna there won't give you a chance to nap during the picture's half-hour running time. The accompanying narration gets pretty anthropomorphic at times, but it's redeemed by a bright sense of humor.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

COMMUNICATIONS

"THE LOST LIBERALS"

New York, N.Y.

TO the Editors: Not the least of America's needs is that the word "liberal" stay the clean word it has always been. For one thing, there is no other word to describe from three to ten million Americans who represent the "independent vote" that regularly decides American elections. When these millions stayed away from the polls in the 1920's, the Republicans ran the country. More recently, they have voted largely but by no means unanimously Democratic. The current bromide that "there are just more Democrats than Republicans" is flatly untrue, unless the liberals are all counted as Democrats. But the liberal vote can never be counted in advance.

Yet this proud word "liberal" found itself put to embarrassing employment in The Commonweal (March 28) in two articles that ran fittingly side by side. They were "The Lost Liberals" and "Symbols: Hiss and Pound." Possibly the authors, Doris Grumbach and Peter Viereck, could find no other word but

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"liberal," but in using it they double-distilled the dilemma.

The author of the first, identifying herself specifically as "the liberal of the Thirties," writes: "It is no longer tenable, or practicable, or loyal, to have been a liberal, even a *small* one."

Ten million people hold onto their hats for that one, until the writer develops a personal *mea culpa* into a general confession for all liberals of the 1930's of espionage, sabotage and civil disobedience. Speaking only of herself, she lists her reading in the 1930's and recalls some picketing and labor agitation.

In doing so, she identifies herself as a professional of some sort. Some liberals did picket and agitate in the 1930's, but in doing so they had ceased to be liberals. They had accepted an organization, an authority and an orthodoxy, all of which disqualified them as liberals in good standing. However, I gather from the accent of the article that she was not a liberal in any sense, but a devout leftist.

The author of the second article compounds the slander against liberals by a parallel confession from an opposite position. Whereas the first seems to expose a special sensitiveness about Whittaker Chambers, this one finds Chambers only a good joke. Instead, he can be read as being sensitive about Pound, Fritz Kuhn and Quisling. (This is said solely on the evidence of the written article, not on any personal knowledge whatever.) However, he turns entirely confident, calm and righteous when he rends the Left: "Today every word against Hiss awakens . . . their (the liberals') long-suppressed, semi-treasonable, semi-idealistic day-dreams about Russia in that early era of Writers' Congresses and Leagues Against War and Fascism. Where they merely strip-teased with revolution for the thrill of feeling progressive and unbourgeois, Hiss is the intellectual who really meant business and eloped."

Once again ten million people are asked to hold onto their hats, as they go through the tunnel a second time.

Yet the author cannot be talking about them. He seems rather to be exhibiting the gallantry of a rightist partisan for his opposite numbers on the Left. He may conceivably be talking about the author of the first article.

In the 1930's it was easy to know when one was truly a liberal. If one found people who called one a Fascist and others who called one a Communist, then one was a liberal. To be called one or the other was not quite enough.

The partisans and professionals had fun in the 1930's with their various closed books and preconceived answers. They shouted and sang and marched against one another, summoning up mobs and feeling the elan of a Perfect Solution. And yet, except for their foolishness, no word against them will be said here.

But a liberal was not having anything like so much fun in the 1930's. There were times when it was hard to find a friend around the partisan campfires. As a condition of their friendship, the partisans all wanted the liberal to *join*.

In this matter of joining, the liberal has to face the much-discussed and much-misunderstood question of responsibility. It is a corollary of assuming a social responsibility for one opinion on a given day, i.e., joining, that one must sacrifice, at least in part, the right, inclination or temptation to change one's opinion on a later day.

The most obvious example is marriage. Liberalism does not go with marriage; or it becomes libertinism. In the matter of political judgments, the liberal may tentatively accept one orthodoxy but he does not forswear all others by doing so. The partisans' very different conduct is what has led to their current painful divorces. The liberal finds his credentials in the dictionary, where the relevant definition is: "Not bound by authority, orthodox tenets, or established forms in political philosophy; independent in opinion; not conservative."

THE American liberal in the 1930's usually voted for Roosevelt and had some misgivings about labor organizers. He resented the Southern subjugation of the Negro and valued states' rights as an instrument against the federal tyrant. He demanded increased social security and regretted the righteous self-pity that accompanied it. He respected any creative private entrepreneur and groaned at unbridled capitalistic greed. Feeling himself only one humble, ignorant citizen, he began to wonder about Roosevelt's foreign arrangements in 1944, but he did not protest. The liberal could often be charged with neutralism or irresponsibility, but never isolationism, moral fear or fanaticism.

The disappearance of the extreme rightists and leftists leaves the liberals rather baffled, like people who have moved to the country and miss the city's traffic bedlam. The rightists went with World War II. Now, since Senator McCarthy began to scream "Communist!" at anyone who takes seriously the Bill of Rights, the leftists have vanished too.

What could one expect but that they would all bob up wearing big lapel signs reading "I am a liberal."

Doubtless they are welcome. What makes them suspect is the contagion of fear they seem to carry. Both articles in the March 28 Commonweal were haunted by this implicit dread. Fear of what? What guilt?

Perhaps fear of Senator McCarthy? The liberals do not fear McCarthy at all. How can they when they are his judge and jury? If Senator McCarthy and Senator

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Taft sometimes affect not to be afraid of the liberals, on the other hand, they are whistling in a dark from which they may never emerge.

The newcomers may wish to lead the liberals. Sad to say, liberals do not often lead and cannot be led. If the new arrivals stay the same as they were, they will not be with the liberals very long. It is true that the liberals of the 1930's have very generally fallen silent. Perhaps they are bewildered by Senator McCarthy's apparent successes and fascinated by the confessions of the reformed partisans.

The growth of a body of true liberals can probably be considered the crowning glory of a democracy. The accretion of independent sanity is the only true wealth a nation can have. Partisans and bigots we have always had. Sometimes they have won liberties, for selfish reasons, that were extended to others. Such were the barons at Runnymede, the Whig families in 18th Century England, the states' rights men in the American Constitutional Convention, and so on. Man seems to prefer to back up into his highest destiny.

But if progress is always to wait on the rabid feuds of ruthless partisans, it is in trouble. The more reliable hope of the world would seem to be the emergence of a liberal mass, the truly independent vote.

That of course is what we are waiting for in the under-developed countries, in India and Spain and Egypt: the birth of their own unregimented, independent, adult minorities. But this is a very slow accretion or dividend of freedom. It does not grow much more rapidly than a coral reef, as the sum of millions of lives that do not end in purposeless death in the sea-bottom muck but all resolutely add their storeys until the crest of the reef lifts up into free, sun-lit air.

It is sad that it takes so long, but it is true.

Meanwhile, let us at least keep the word clean, for the others to use.

DAVID CORT.

The Love Song of F. Scott Fitzgerald

(As suggested by Budd Schulberg's novel, The Disenchanted, *Arthur Mizener's biography,* The Far Side of Paradise, *etc., etc. With the usual apologies to Mr. Eliot.)*

LET us go then, you and I,
When Dartmouth is spread out against the sky
Like a student cracked-up on a ski-run.
Oh, damn it, Budd, don't ask, "What is it?"
Let us go and make our visit.

St. Paul bore me. Princeton and Hollywood
Undid me.

Between the conception
And the creation
Falls the Script.

I should have been a pair of shoulder pads
Scatting across the gridiron, beating Yale.

In the dorm the coeds come and go
Talking of Michael Arlen, Bow.

Where are the words that stab, what ideas grow
Out of this academic rubbish?
And the dull class gives no shelter, the library no relief,
And the dry prof no sound of soda water.

Chiantichiantichianti

And when I was a youngster, prepping at Newman,
The coach sent me in to play safety,
And I was frightened. And out I came.
In one's room with a book, there you feel free.
I drink, much of the night, and go south in the winter.

Perkins is the kindest editor, quarrying
Novels out of Wolfe, mixing
Hemingway and Eastman.
And indeed there will be time,
Time for *Esquire* and the *Post,*
Time for *Gatsby* and the *Night,*
And time yet for a hundred indiscretions;
Time for Perkins and revisions.

In the dorm the coeds come and go
Talking of Michael Arlen, Bow.

To Hollywood then I came
Burned out burned out
Twad twad twad
Junk junk junk junk
So couthly forced.
Thalberg

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Unreal City
Under the real smog of a California dawn
Here is no art but only tripe
Tripe and no art and Sunset Boulevard
Here one can neither think nor dream nor write
But loud technical mouthing
There is not even silence in the desert
But red sullen faces of cameramen snarl
From platforms on location

I see crowds of extras, walking round a set.
Thank you. If you see dear Mr. Schulberg, your father,
Tell him I bring the scenario myself:
One must be so careful these days, with
budding novelists about.

In the
In the dark
In the dark night of the soul
It's always three o'clock in the morning.

I had not thought death had undone so many.
Then I saw one I knew, and stopped him, crying:
"Bishop!
"You who were with me on the *Lit* at Nassau!
"That Trilling review you planted last year in *Partisan,*
"Has it begun to sprout? Will it come out this year?
"Or has the editorial frost disturbed its bed?"

No! I am not Prince Hamlet, nor Prince Scott,
either,
As Lardner said I was.
I am no Conrad—and in my bibliography
there's no great matter;
I have seen the fashion of my Jazz Age flicker,
And I have seen the Nouveau Critic hold my coon-
skin coat, and snicker,
And in short, I was afraid.
"Am I right or wrong?"
I ask the headwaiter . . .
I smile, of course,
And go on drinking Bushmill's.

I grow old . . . I am knelled . . .
I shall no longer wear the bottoms of my trousers
belled.

You will see me any evening in the bar.
As from afar
I remark a classmate assaulted in a speakeasy
in New York,
Crawling home to the Princeton Club to die.
Another classmate tumbled from a skyscraper . . .

I remain self-possessed
Except that sometimes there's a ghostly rumble
among the drums,
The asthmatic whisper of trombones,
Recalling Carcassonne and proms.

I shall wear my football togs, and walk out upon
the field.
I have heard the cheerleaders cheering, each to each.

I do not think that they will cheer for me.

And would it have been worth it, after all,
After the gin, the olive sandwiches,
Among the porcelain,
Would it have been worth while,
To have bitten off the Great American Novel,
To have crossed the river, and squatted on my hams
under the trees,
To say: "I am Lazarus, Budd, come from the dead,
Come back to show you how, tell you all—tell you
all, that's fit to print?"

And would it have been worth it, after all,
After the Jelly-Beans and Flappers, after
The scrapbooks and the shawl,
After the Paris nights in clusters,
After the cotton bathing trunks,
full of the Mediterranean's bright heat—
If one, gazing at the figurine,
Or darting hurried glances at the busts
of Shakespeare and Galileo, should say:
"That is not it at all,
That is not what I meant, at all."

But at my back from time to time I hear
The horns of Marmons and the sax's wail,
which shall bring
Scott to Zelda in the spring.

The novel's strand is broken: *The Last Tycoon* is
Clutched by stronger hands—the Bunny Hug. The
tributes
Cross from East to West, unheard. The readers are
departed.
Huck's river, run softly, till they end my song.

Mrs. Parker comes at noon.
And then the lighting of the candles
In the William Wordsworth Room.
Shantih shantih shantih

JOHN ABBOT CLARK.

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Salvation In the Novels

JOHN W. SIMONS

GRAHAM GREENE, whose works of fiction continue to startle and confound the critics, has published a book of essays which should go a long way towards clarifying his artistic prepossessions. By gazing intently at the works of other novelists he clearly reveals his own thematic affinities. Wherever there is fellowship at the dark confines of evil, as in the case of James and Mauriac, the criticism takes on a wonderful luminosity. It is this kind of criticism, which informs somewhat less than half the volume, that gives *The Lost Childhood and Other Essays* its special value. The rest of the book has the virtues and failings of most impressionistic criticism.

It may come as a surprise to some readers that Greene's finest and most extensive criticism is devoted to Henry James. Yet, despite their evident remoteness to each other in technique and experience, they have both felt the touch of what Baudelaire referred to as "the wing of madness." Just as James is inclined to throw the reader off guard by referring to *The Turn of the Screw* as a "fairy-tale pure and simple," so does Greene when he calls such a novel as *The Ministry of Fear* a mere "entertainment." In each instance the author disguises an obsession.

The obsession is with evil. This "evil" is not simply a succession of misdeeds or even of statutory crimes. It is a supernatural ambience, an intangible but palpable world which coexists with another world of normality and innocence.

James' fascination with evil, so patent in *The Turn of the Screw,* first came home to me when, many years ago, I read "The Pupil." Here indeed was supernatural evil, a nameless and ambiguous entity, presiding over everything, procuring everything, but doing so without any visible connivance.

It is somewhere in this world of nemesis, which circulates through and envelops the world of calculated motives and acts, that Greene and James recognize each other. Greene refers to certain of James' characters as being possessed of "an egotism so complete that you could think that something inhuman, supernatural, was working through the poor devils it had chosen." The driving force behind a Jamesian novel is, says Greene, "a sense of evil religious in its intensity."

But James, for all his religious sense of evil, has no corresponding sense of supernatural good. The realm of Grace is for him a *terra incognita.* It is therefore not in James but in Mauriac that Greene finds his best self-reflection. Greene's analysis of Mauriac, although confined to a single essay, is extraordinarily penetrating. His admiration, however, is so great that he feels obliged to defend questionable traits of style. (Without going the whole distance with Sartre, I am of the opinion that Mauriac intervenes too much in his own novels. He either comments too freely or manipulates too obviously. Sartre says he "installs himself in his creatures as God does in His creation.")

When Greene calls attention to certain lines in a Mauriac novel, the reader is startled to recognize that Greene might just as easily be quoting from himself. "We are saved or damned by our thoughts, not by our actions." "How little, in truth, we are changed by what happens." "The patience of vice is infinite." "God is the good temptation to which we sometimes succumb." "Our Lord requires us to love our enemies. It is often easier to do this than not to hate those whom we love." It would be hard to distinguish which of these are Mauriac's and which are Greene's, but in all of them the ancestry of Pascal is evident.

THE mention of Pascal is relevant. The quarrel between nature and Grace, which has harried French literature from the days of Port-Royal to our own, has in one form or another become the obsession of the contemporary Catholic novel.

In saying this I do not mean that the novels written under the obsession are *romans à thèse,* and it would be a sterile kind of criticism which would examine them on that assumption. But the sensibilities from which they emanate are sensibilities which have long respired in the Pascalian atmosphere, and that atmosphere is one of radical pessimism.

Greene's pessimism is clearly revealed in the title essay of his book. His adolescent reading had peopled his imagination with characters—violent, frustrated, doomed, and driven—who were forever after to be the equivalents for those whom he met in the "real" world, as well as to be the prototypes for those twisted and tormented beings who inhabit his novels. It is one piece of fiction in particular, Marjorie Bowen's *The Viper of Milan,* which fixes forever what he himself refers to as his "ruling fantasy"—"perfect evil walking the world where perfect good can never walk again."

It costs no effort, of course, to make the discovery that evil is abroad in this world, and what Pascal noted in the Parisian salons and Mauriac in the placid countryside of the Landes, Greene finds easy to discover in the

Father Simons is a priest of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia who teaches at Immaculata College.

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mechanized desert of the modern city—the weird anonymous desert in which every man is an Ishmael.

It may be, of course, that the pessimism of all three is more temperamental than intellectual. Nevertheless, it is fairly evident that Pascal's intellectual bouts with Montaigne have left their scars, and I am not the first to have noticed striking resemblances between certain of the *Pensées* and the *Apologie de Raymond de Sebonde*. Mauriac, in a score of books and essays, tries to lay to rest the persistent ghost of Pascal. And it is Greene who states that if Pascal wrote novels it would be after the manner of Mauriac.

I DO not wish to get involved deeply in a discussion of Grace and the novel. Grace is not simply a commodity; it is a supernatural *mysterium*, and its technical discussion is best left to the theologians. There is at present too much amateur discusssion of a concept bristling with difficulties, and one is tempted, after having suffered some of the theologistic drivel of literary cenacles, to wish that the whole business would be forgotten. *"Fi, fi, fi de la grâce,"* was Anne of Austria's irreverent but understandable comment on the endless theologizing of the pious bluestockings of Port-Royal.

There are, nevertheless, a few things which must be said, and they are meant primarily as warnings to novelists. It is false to take everything away from nature so as to hand it over to Grace. Man then becomes, no matter how wonderfully galvanized, a mere puppet of Grace, and God is reduced to a literal *deus ex machina*. It is false to exalt evil to the status of a demiurge, for, though the Devil walks among us, he walks with a decided limp. It is only in *Faust* that the Devil talks to God as to an equal. It is certainly true that the modern world pays too little attention to the Devil, but such folly is not neutralized by paying him too much. And it is not only false, but perilous, to manifest a contempt for the moral virtues or to speak as if the Ten Commandments were without any sanction other than that of "right reason."

Novelists, it is true, find it difficult to make virtue palatable. Mauriac confesses that "nothing is more insipid than virtue, nothing more heroic than sanctity." But even sanctity eludes them, and Bernanos, the only genuine novelist of sanctity we have, is only a half-success. And so our novelists turn to prodigals and prostitutes; Mauriac leaves Thérèse abandoned, while Greene redeems Sarah and endows her with miracles.

"What do priests make of the interior life?" asks the Abbé Menou-Legrais in Bernanos' *Under the Sun of Satan*. And he gives the answer himself. "A dreary battlefield of warring instincts. Of morality? A hygiene of the senses." No one will deny that we need these scoldings from time to time, for there is always the danger of contracting the frontiers of Christianity, of denuding it of mystery, and of scaling down the struggle—which is with Dominations and Powers—to the level of a schoolboy tug-of-war.

But even when we have granted this much, we still have the right to quarrel with these eschatological novelists who exhibit an undue contempt for the commonplace virtues. Most of us are, in a sense, doomed to be commonplace, but that does not mean that we are doomed to be complacent.

Bernanos, for example, divides human beings into three classes—the saints, the mediocre, and the possessed. The saints are rare and so are the possessed. The rest of mankind, as we expect, falls into the middle group. This in itself is not alarming. What is alarming is Bernanos' belief that both the possessed and the mediocre have severed their ties with God and live outside Him. This is pessimism *in excelsis*.

GREENE, fortunately, is not a pamphleteer, and we shall look to him in vain for anathemas. But his art dwells by preference on the border cases, the fate seekers, the extremes. Average people are of no use to his talents, and his themes are thereby justified.

"It is true to say," writes Eliot in a passage which has clearly attracted Greene, "that the glory of man is his capacity for salvation; it is also true to say that his glory is his capacity for damnation." "It is better," we read in the same passage, "to do evil than to do nothing; at least, we exist."

Sound though this statement is, we have to remember that it is a paradox, and admits of no mechanical application. It would be wrong to presume that because a man is not obviously a saint or obviously a sinner he must be spiritually inert. Dante may have had an aristocratic disdain for mediocre souls, for those who lived in the world *"senza infamia e senza lodo."* But he is at least sensible enough not to multiply those slothful souls whom he wishes neither to save nor to damn. He leaves them at the vestibule of hell, and no one can complain that his hell, purgatory, and heaven are on this account meagerly populated.

Greene carries this idea of man's double capacity—for damnation and salvation—a stage further. "The greatest saints," he says, "are people with more than a normal capacity for evil, and the most vicious people only escaped sanctity with the greatest difficulty."

It is obvious that Greene has in his imagination his private hierarchy of saints and sinners, but by what means he gauges individual capacities for sin and sanctity I cannot tell. I find, for example, no clue in *The Story of a Soul* that St. Thérèse of Lisieux had "a more than normal capacity for evil." But then perhaps she is not a "great" saint.

The second half of Greene's statement is more difficult to translate, but I suppose it simply to mean that

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God has a predilection for great sinners. That God has a predilection for sinners no one will be likely to deny, but there seems to be a perversity—a theatricality even —in this insistence on the word "great." The prodigal son seems to have been a consistent sinner, and for all I know he may even have been a "great" sinner, but I doubt that his father examined his credentials.

There is danger in this preoccupation with the extremes of virtue and vice, with its rude liquidation of the spiritual "middle classes." While mediocrity is contemptible as an ideal, it is not contemptible as an achievement. Moreover, to speak of the moral virtues as being dismal or dreary (*fade,* says Mauriac; *morne,* says Bernanos) is the privilege only of saints, not because they have condemned them, but because they have assimilated and transcended them.

All the same, we must be deeply grateful to these intrepid raiders of the supernatural. It is wonderful to see novelists of high artistic endowments storming the outposts of heaven and hell. When, however, we come to examine the spoils which they bring back to our middle kingdom, we must not be surprised to discover that they do not differ greatly from the trophies which already adorn our walls.

The artist can seek only what he has already found. And if in their daring depredations they seem to wrest more from hell than from heaven, once again we must not be surprised. It is easy to lie in ambush for sin, for sin is a willing captive. But Grace insists on her freedom and eludes even the most inexorable pursuer. *"La Grâce,"* said Mauriac in a high moment of wisdom, *"la Grâce ne s'invente pas."*

Books

A World of "Nothing"

THE MAN OUTSIDE: The Prose Works of Wolfgang Borchert. New Directions. $3.50.

By WILLIAM P. CLANCY

GABRIEL MARCEL reminds us that in whatever direction we may look today it is hard to escape the fact that we have entered upon what Christians might describe as an eschatological age. Terrible force is given to his reminder in a place where man's capacity for final self-destruction was as evident as in post-war Germany. Here it was impossible to escape the spectre of annihilation; no matter to what perfumed sanctuary one might retreat, the stench of death would follow.

The imaginative man forced to function in such a milieu is exposed to a unique temptation, not to seek a deliverance from death but rather a surrender to it which carries some shred of meaning. Wolfgang Borchert was a young German who sought such a meaning. Born in 1921, soldier and sufferer on the Russian front during the bitter campaigns of 1941, confined in a Nazi prison during the later years of the war, he returned to his native Hamburg in 1945. There he found a city whose ruin was a nightmare symbol of what had happened to his whole generation, more tragically "lost" than any other in history. He died in Hamburg in 1947. In his prose works, now published in this country, he left his anguished commentary on a world of "nothing."

"Who will write us new laws of harmony?" Borchert asked. "We have no further use for well-tempered clavichords. We ourselves are too much dissonance." This search for the principled annihilation lies at the center of his work. The title piece, *The Man Outside,* was described by the author as "a play which no theatre will produce and no public will want to see." (It became one of the most widely produced and discussed plays in Germany after Borchert's death, and was three times presented over the BBC.)

The drama is set in the author's home, Hamburg, and tells of a returned soldier to whom all doors are closed, whom even death rejects when, in despair, he seeks a too easy solution through suicide in the Elbe. (Death's taunt "I spit on your suicide" surely represents an ultimate in humiliation and defeat.) Even God here suffers the fate of all else. Reduced to a pathetic impotence, He appears as a helpless old man, weeping over but powerless to assist His "poor children." The only voice heard in defense of life is the voice of "the Other," a symbol of all that has been and will be left behind. But "the Other" can offer no reason for living beyond "life itself," a highly unconvincing reason in the context of post-war Hamburg, and so we are left with a final nihilism.

Most of the stories are very short and compact. The half-mad soldier, nicknamed "Jesus," whose duty it is to try graves for size, the young prisoner whose only remaining contact with life is a dandelion which he finds in the yard, the soldier on the eastern front who fondles a piece of pink cloth cut from his sweetheart's petticoat (all that is left of a world which still contained love), these are the figures in Borchert's apocalypse.

Borchert's work indicates that he was primarily a poet; one looks in vain for the novelist's technical accomplishments; the sense for movement and the ability to objectify experience are absent from these stories. They are, more properly, extended metaphors, each communicating, through symbol, something of the dreadful immediacy of the catastrophe in which the poet played his part. There is no concern with abstract problems in these stories, no questioning of "war guilt" or interest in the reasons for the catastrophe. Man is beyond rationalizing, just as he is beyond tragedy. For with the death of civilization and the advent of "nothing" has come the death of reason, of feeling, and of tragedy. When the final curtain falls, "worms and fish break into noiseless applause."

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Some Beautiful People

FARAWAY THE SPRING. By Richard Hagopian. Scribners. $2.75.

By JOE DEVER

YOU can rail against sentimentalism in certain whimsical writers if you like, but it's rather a waste of breath. Take away sentimentality from writers like Charles Dickens, Saroyan, Leonard Feeney, Sir James Barrie and maybe you'll weaken the whimsy. In short, you have to take an excessive defect along with an excessive talent in a number of good writers—*vide*: Wolfe, Farrell and Dreiser, among the moderns, or Thomas Hardy, Dickens, Galsworthy among the Victorians, and so on.

After reading this poignant, refreshing new novel by another poet laureate of America-Armenia, one is inclined to laud a successful mixture of whimsy, sentimentality and realism. The bard of Fresno himself can do more with the whimsy but less with the story-line than Mr. Hagopian has done.

He gives us here, man and his family in the trap of life as it is sprung in Chelsea, Massachusetts, across the bridge from Charlestown.

Anyone who has ever lived in a grubby three-decker, hemmed in by the sweat and fury of the city, will know the setting. Anyone who has eaten Armenian food, quaffed Dago Red with Italian neighbors or fled through the musty darkness of a three-decker hallway, will recognize the world of Setrak the shoemaker and his family.

Speaking of Shakespeare, Mr. Hagopian has one of Setrak's bright daughters say: "He just put people together and let life take care of the rest. Life made them go crazy, killed them or made them happy."

That about sums up the significance of Setrak's struggle with himself and the furies of a lop-sided industrial society. As a champion *tavloo,* or backgammon player, Setrak plays to win against great odds, symbolizing his struggle with society for the survival of self and family. He loses, yet wins, as all do who

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are true to certain basic values. And through the comic, yet fatalistic tenement gloom of Mr. Hagopian's world, the love of family shines and lilts, one of the few lasting citadels in an anxious age.

A Village Crusader

THERE WAS A MAN IN OUR TOWN. By Granville Hicks. Viking. $3.

By FRANK GETLEIN

THE man of the title is Ellery Hodder, retired sociologist and new resident of the town Colchester, an upstate New York village. Ellery sets out to bring the blessings of the Welfare State to Colchester and to upset the traditional Republican management of village affairs. He actually does win the climactic election, but fails to gain control of the town administration because, as Mr. Hicks in the guise of a narrator has been insisting right along, he forgot that politics is people.

In reality, the political factor that Ellery forgot was a people, is an opponent who thinks nothing of killing pet dogs and setting barns on fire in order to drive a key official out of town. In other words, Ellery loses because Hicks is doing the dealing, and he is dealing from the bottom.

At an early stage the hero fades into the murky middle-distance; the bulk of the novel is an examination of some of the people who comprise Colchester politics. Mr. Hicks' structural sketches of the Volunteer Fire Company, the P.T.A., the Friends of the Library and the local baseball team, are accurate enough. He goes on, however, to populate the scene, to create the abstractionist tangle of family, finance, pride, envy, sloth and lust that is indeed the political world in many small towns, and he fails badly. Again, his observation is perfectly accurate; but his characters are like those in a village newspaper. If you don't know them already, you'll never really meet them through Mr. Hicks. The book becomes an uninteresting hodge-podge of nameless people and their indistinguishable involvements.

Mr. Hicks, like his hero, has forgotten that fiction, like politics, is people.

The World And the Priest

THE MISSIONARY SPIRIT IN PARISH LIFE. By Abbe G. Michonneau. Newman. $2.75.
THE PEOPLE'S PRIEST. By John C. Heenan. Sheed and Ward. $2.75.

By DENNIS J. GEANEY

THE LATE Cardinal Suhard has given us in his pastoral, *Priests Among Men,* a broad outline of the principles upon which priestly activity should be based in this age of unparalleled crisis. The same Cardinal encouraged Abbé Michonneau to translate these principles by the

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process of trial and error into body and spirit in a particular parish. In 1949 the findings and conclusions of the abbé and his team of priests appeared in English under the title *Revolution in a City Parish.*

Five years after the book appeared in French Abbé Michonneau wondered if his original message was rightly understood. Did the reader copy the experiments and techniques without understanding the missionary spirit which alone can animate methods and procedures? Thus *The Missionary Spirit in Parish Life* comes to us as a further contribution to a badly needed pastoral theology for our times and a modest effort in the development of a parish priest's spirituality.

To those who caught the missionary spirit in *Revolution in a City Parish* without having it spelled out for them, the new volume is a bit repetitious—but only a bit. The statements made in the first volume were made as a result of limited experience. Five years more experience and a change in parishes gives the author reason for firmer conviction and greater emphasis. The works of Michonneau should be required reading for every parish priest.

Bishop Heenan's *The People's Priest* follows the usual pattern of books by priests for priests. It was written especially for young priests. There is no attempt to assess the status quo of the parish as an institution. The book is concerned with the daily round of duties of the priest, the administration of the sacraments, preaching, visiting the sick, etc. While the book might not be called revolutionary, it contains some sound advice for the neophyte.

REVIEWERS

Joe Dever is a novelist and short-story writer whose home is in Boston.

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First Quarter, 1952

Here are some excerpts from recent issues of The Commonweal which indicate the sort of subjects treated and some representative points of view:

SOCIAL LEGISLATION (Donald McDonald, January 25 issue):

"Its essence must be explained to the American people . . . such law has both social and personalist implications; the common good subsumes the personal good; . . . the government will intervene only when private citizens are either unable or unwilling to serve the common good."

SIGMUND FREUD (Victor White, March 7 issue):

"Freud was surely right in sensing that religion as we know it was somehow a sign of some radical abnormality and incompleteness in man; but unduly optimistic in supposing it could be psychoanalyzed away."

MORAL OBLIGATION OF THE SCIENTIST (Alex Comfort, January 18):

"Even today a government is going to think twice before it calls a medical psychologist to assist in spreading hatred, or a medical bacteriologist to assist in spreading disease. It knows it runs the risk of meeting a refusal which would have the support of very nearly the whole of medical opinion throughout the world."

RELIGIOUS CONFLICT IN LITERATURE (Sam Hynes, February 22):

"The apostate . . . should succeed as well as the convert in translating religion into literature. For if the ascent to grace is dramatic, the fall from grace is equally so."

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